



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 2 December 1968

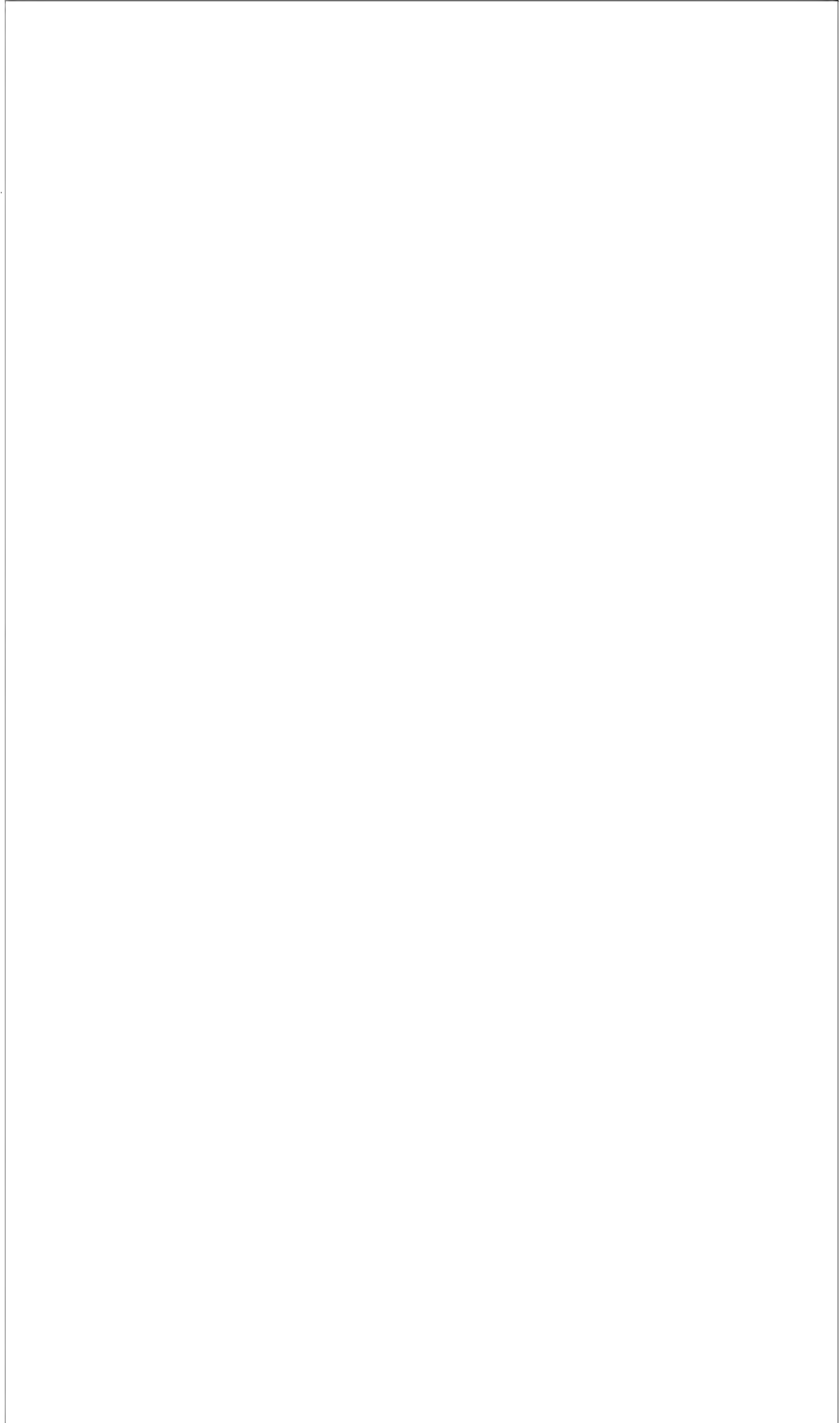


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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
2 DECEMBER 1968

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1. South Vietnam



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2. South Vietnam

Intercepts indicate that several Communist units which have been inactive for the past two months are getting ready for action in northern I Corps. There are also scattered signs of Communist combat preparations farther south, notably in the provinces on the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon. There has been no indication so far that the Communists plan a drive on Saigon itself.

3. Arab Terrorists

With the announcement of two mergers last week, Palestinian terrorist groups edged a bit closer to the unity that has eluded them since 1948. The terrorists also say they have worked out a modus vivendi with the Jordanian Government.

Unity is still a long way off, but every step in that direction adds to the terrorists' effectiveness, both as a military threat to Israel and as a militant voice among their fellow Arabs.

4. Israel-Jordan

Since the reported agreement between the Jordanian Government and the terrorists, Tel Aviv has made it clear that it holds Jordan responsible for recent terrorist incidents. Yesterday's Israeli raid, which blew up bridges on Jordan's only rail line and on a key road, drives the point home.

5. Japan

Sato shuffled his cabinet Friday. His goal was to heal his party's divisions in anticipation of the upcoming debates on Okinawa and the security treaty with the US.

What emerged was a grouping which gives representation to the factions disappointed in the recent election for party president, moves Sato's most prominent potential successors to important positions, and gives key party posts to his two chief lieutenants.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of US
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi Charges US Attacks on North Vietnam: Hanoi has on separate occasions over the weekend accused the US of conducting air attacks and reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam as well as violating the Demilitarized Zone. Referring to recent US pilot rescue missions in southern North Vietnam and to allied patrols in the Demilitarized Zone, Nhan Dan on 1 December described the actions as "serious acts of war" and as a sign that the US had not yet given up its "aggressive designs" against North Vietnam despite the bombing halt.

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Soviets Emphasize Economic Aid to North Vietnam: Commenting on the aid agreements recently negotiated in Moscow between Soviet officials and North Vietnam's Le Thanh Nghi, both Pravda and Izvestia emphasized the economic nature of the Soviet assistance, while virtually excluding references to military aid. The two commentaries, according to Ambassador Thompson, are in line with the Soviets' intention of depicting North Vietnam as a country interested primarily in getting on with postwar economic reconstruction, with the Soviet Union as its chief supporter.

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Military Movements: There have been numerous indications of movement of regular army units and probable infiltration groups in North Vietnam in recent High Command and Rear Services messages. [redacted]

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Commentary on the Bombing Halt: [redacted]

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[redacted] the 31 March bombing halt generated a good deal of debate at the man-in-the-street level. Older people [redacted] were prone to see it as an American gesture for peace, while the younger generation felt it marked a victory over the US. [redacted]

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[redacted] North Vietnamese women who had lost relatives in the war were the real "doves." They were thoroughly tired of the whole business.

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Hanoi Speeds Up Rice Harvest: Further information has been received on Hanoi's efforts to get the most out of its fall rice harvest. On 23 November, the Ministry of Agriculture ordered the mobilization of all available personnel to complete the harvest prior to the bad weather expected by late November. In addition, the ministry cautioned agriculture officials to ensure the quick replanting of rice and other agricultural products.

There seems to be little prospect of North Vietnam becoming self-sufficient in rice production for some time.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL
ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report to-
day.

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